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AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) An external storage device connectable to a host computer, comprising:

a non-volatile semiconductor memory;

an interface to connect to the host computer; and

a controller to access the non-volatile semiconductor memory in response to a command and an address from the host computer;

wherein said non-volatile semiconductor memory is divided into plural areas;

wherein a first command for accessing a first area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory is different from a second command for accessing a second area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory;

wherein the controller determines whether the command from the host computer is the first command or the second command,

wherein, when the command is the first command, the controller carries out first command processing to a sector of the first area in accordance with the address from the host computer; and

wherein, when the command is the second command, the controller carries out second command processing to a sector of the second area in accordance with the address from the host computer,

further comprising information indicative of the plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory,

the external storage device dynamically changing the sizes of the first and second areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory on the basis of an instruction of the host computer by a part which rewrites the information indicating of the plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory.

3. – 5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 2, wherein the non-volatile semiconductor memory includes plural areas in which a data area is made of a protected data area and a non-protected data area,

wherein, when the host computer is to access the protected data area, the external storage device performs authentication through an authentication procedure for accessing to the protected data area, and

wherein said first area is the non-protected data area and the second area is the protected data area.

7. (Previously Presented) An external storage device connectable to a host computer, comprising:

a non-volatile semiconductor memory;

an interface to connect to the host computer; and

a controller to access the non-volatile semiconductor memory in response to a command and an address from the host computer;

wherein said non-volatile semiconductor memory is divided into plural areas;

wherein a first command for accessing a first area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory is different from a second command for accessing a second area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory;

wherein the controller determines whether the command from the host computer is the first command or the second command,

wherein, when the command is the first command, the controller carries out first command processing to a sector of the first area in accordance with the address from the host computer; and

wherein, when the command is the second command, the controller carries out second command processing to a sector of the second area in accordance with the address from the host computer,

wherein the non-volatile semiconductor memory includes an area which stores data of the host computer and an area which stores information on the external storage device,

wherein the area of the non-volatile semiconductor memory which stores the data of the host computer is made of a protected data area and a non-protected data area,

wherein the area of the non-volatile semiconductor memory which stores the information on the external storage device stores location information on the protected data area,

wherein the external storage device dynamically changes the protected data area of the non-volatile semiconductor memory on the basis of an instruction of the host computer by a part which rewrites the location information on the protected data area of the non-volatile semiconductor memory,

wherein, when the host computer is to access the protected data area, the external storage device performs authentication through an authentication procedure for accessing to the protected data area, and

wherein said first area is the non-protected data area and the second area is the protected data area.

8. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 2, further comprising a part, which is provided in the connecting part and recognizes the kind of host computer during activation, performing access control on the plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory according to the kind of host computer.

9. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 2, the plural areas comprising:

a user data area for storing user data therein; and

a management data area for storing management data therein;

the user data area further comprising said first and second areas, wherein said first area is a normal area and said second area is a protected area.

10. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 9, wherein:

the first commands are commands for accessing to the normal area,

the second commands are commands for accessing to the protected area,

and

the first commands for accessing to the normal area and the second commands for accessing to the protected area are different from each other.

11. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claims 10, wherein:

the management data area stores a start address of the protected area; and

the part for controlling the non-volatile semiconductor memory accesses the protected area when the second command for accessing to the protected area and an address issued prior to the commands by the host computer coincides with the start address of the protected area within the management data area and a protection function of the protected area is disabled.

12. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 9, wherein:

the management data area stores a start address of the protected area; and

the part for controlling the non-volatile semiconductor memory accesses the protected area when an address issued prior to the commands by the host computer coincides with the start address of the protected area within the management data area.

13. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 9, wherein:

the part for controlling the non-volatile semiconductor memory carries out authentication of a user, and it disables a protection function of the protected area when the authentication of the user is successful.

14. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 13, wherein:

the management data area stores a password of the user; and

the part for controlling the non-volatile semiconductor memory carries out the authentication of the user by comparing a password from the host computer to the password stored in the management data area.

15. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 13, wherein:

the part for controlling the non-volatile semiconductor memory carries out the authentication of the user when a command from the host computer is a protection disabling command for disabling the protection function for the protected area.

16. (Previously Presented) An external storage device according to claim 13, wherein:

the part for controlling the non-volatile semiconductor memory carries out authentication of the user when the external storage device is turned on.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) An external storage device connectable to a host computer, comprising:

a non-volatile semiconductor memory;

an interface to connect to the host computer; and

a controller to access the non-volatile semiconductor memory in response to a command and an address from the host computer;

wherein said non-volatile semiconductor memory is divided into plural areas;

wherein a first command for accessing a first area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory is different from a second command for accessing a second area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory;

wherein the controller determines whether the command from the host computer is the first command or the second command,

wherein, when the command is the first command, the controller carries out first command processing to a sector of the first area in accordance with the address from the host computer; and

wherein, when the command is the second command, the controller carries out second command processing to a sector of the second area in accordance with the address from the host computer, further comprising:

a register which stores the address of the second area of the non-volatile semiconductor memory;

wherein, when the command from the host computer is the first command, the controller determines whether a sector to be accessed by the host computer is within the second area or not by comparing the address from the host computer with the address of the second area stored in the register and carries out the first command processing to a sector in the first area if the sector to be accessed by the host computer does not exist in the second area.

19. (New) An external storage device connectable to a host computer, comprising:

a non-volatile semiconductor memory;

an interface to connect to the host computer; and

a controller to access the non-volatile semiconductor memory in response to a command and an address from the host computer;

wherein said non-volatile semiconductor memory is adapted to be divided into plural areas;

wherein a first command for accessing a first area among the plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory is different from a second command for accessing a second area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory;

wherein the controller determines whether a command from the host computer is the first command or the second command,

wherein, when the command determined by the controller is the first command, the controller carries out first command processing to a sector of the first area in accordance with the address from the host computer; and

wherein, when the command determined by the controller is the second command, the controller carries out second command processing to a sector of the second area in accordance with the address from the host computer,

wherein the non-volatile semiconductor memory stores area information associated with the plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory,

wherein the external storage device changes sizes of the first and second areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory and a border between the first area and the second area in response to a third command from the host computer by updating the area information stored in the non-volatile semiconductor memory to a new area information, wherein the third command is different from the first and second commands.

20. (New) An external storage device connectable to a host computer, comprising:

a non-volatile semiconductor memory;

an interface to connect to the host computer; and

a controller to access the non-volatile semiconductor memory in response to a command and an address from the host computer;

wherein said non-volatile semiconductor memory is adapted to be divided into plural areas;

wherein a first command for accessing a first area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory is different from a second command for accessing a second area among said plural areas of the non-volatile semiconductor memory;

wherein the controller determines whether a command from the host computer is the first command or the second command,

wherein, when the command determined by the controller is the first command, the controller carries out first command processing to a sector of the first area in accordance with the address from the host computer; and

wherein, when the command determined by the controller is the second command, the controller carries out second command processing to a sector of the second area in accordance with the address from the host computer,

wherein the first area is a non-protected data area,

wherein the second area is a protected data area,

wherein the non-volatile semiconductor memory stores information regarding the size and address of the protected data area,

wherein the controller changes the size and address of the protected data area of the non-volatile semiconductor memory in response to a third command from the host computer, wherein the third command is different from the first and second commands, and

wherein, when the host computer accesses the protected data area, the external storage device performs an authentication procedure for accessing to the protected data area.

21. (New) An external storage device according to claim 19, the plural areas comprising:

a user data area to store user data therein; and

a management data area to store management data therein;

wherein the user data area further comprises said first and second areas, and

wherein said first area is a normal area and said second area is a protected area.

22. (New) An external storage device according to claim 21, wherein:

the border is a start address of the protected area;

the management data area stores the area information including the sizes and the start address of the protected area; and

the controller accesses the protected area when an address issued prior to the second command from the host computer coincides with the start address of the protected area in the area information within the management data area.

23. (New) An external storage device according to claim 21, wherein:

the controller carries out authentication of a user, and disables a protection function of the protected area when the authentication of the user is successful.

24. (New) An external storage device according to claim 23, wherein:
the management data area stores a password of the user; and
the controller carries out the authentication of the user by comparing a password from the host computer to the password stored in the management data area.

25. (New) An external storage device according to claim 23, wherein:
the controller carries out the authentication of the user when a command from the host computer is a protection disabling command for disabling the protection function of the protected area.

26. (New) An external storage device according to claim 23, wherein:
the controller carries out authentication of the user when the external storage device is turned on.